

**BINGHAM COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
REASON AND DECISION**

**APPLICATION OF:**

Bingham County's initiation of:

- (1) designating Comprehensive Plan Map Areas and Zoning Districts for parcels formerly located within the municipal boundaries of Atomic City; and
  - (2) amendment of Comprehensive Plan Map Areas and Zoning District designations for parcels in the surrounding Atomic City Area pursuant to Bingham County Code 10-15-2(A)
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**Requested Action:**

Atomic City was formally disincorporated on November 30, 2020, by Order and Declaration of Disincorporation signed by the Bingham County Board of Commissioners. Unfortunately, when the Order was recorded, the designation of Zoning Districts and correlating Comprehensive Plan Map areas was not discussed.

When Planning and Development Services "Staff" identified the absence of Comprehensive Plan Map designations and Zoning designations, Staff sent letters to fifty-two (52) property owners within the former Atomic City boundaries and in the area outside of the City boundaries. This letter, dated March 22, 2023, included a questionnaire for the property owner to provide comments, questions, and/or recommendations for their lot/parcel's Zoning District recommendation. From those fifty-two property letters, twelve (12) responses were received. Although some property owners provided recommendations for their lots/parcels to be zoned Commercial or zoned for a specific land use, Staff is recommending Zoning District designations that match the existing land uses on the property. By Staff recommending a Comprehensive Plan Map designation of Residential/Agriculture or Multi-Use, this should allow property owners flexibility for future desired Zoning Amendment Applications and/or land uses.

Staff brought the need to cure to the attention of the Planning and Zoning Commission at its April 9, 2025, regular meeting. The Commission voted to commence a county-initiated process to designate and/or amend the Comprehensive Plan Map areas and Zoning Districts.

The areas being reviewed total approximately 991.76 assessed acres, and are specifically identified on Exhibit S-16. The areas are not in the floodplain, are not located in an Area of City Impact, or a High Nitrate Priority Area.

Applicable Regulations: Bingham County Comprehensive Plan, dated November 20, 2018.  
Bingham County Zoning Ordinance 2012-08, as amended

Public Hearing Date: June 11, 2025

## **I. PUBLIC HEARING RECORD AND INFORMATION**

1. The following was reviewed by the Commission:
  - a. Application and materials provided by the Applicant; and
  - b. Staff Report with exhibits.
2. At the Public Hearing, Planning and Development Services Assistant Director/Lead Planner Addie Jo Jackman presented the Staff Report for the Application. She reviewed the requested action and acknowledged that before the Public Hearing, the Commissioners were provided the record of written testimony received, which included:

(T-1) Bingham County Public Works submitted testimony in a neutral position stating they have no objections or concerns.

(T-2) Bingham County Surveyor submitted testimony in a neutral position and has no comments or concerns.

(T-3) Daniel Branagan of 6854 E Sunnyside Rd, Idaho Falls, ID, submitted testimony in support of the continued growth in Atomic City and allowing commercial growth. He provided the zoning desired on various portions of his parcel for consideration and a map for reference.

(T-4) John Reffit, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Field Manager, 1405 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls, ID, provided testimony in a neutral position expressing concerns regarding the inclusion of United States public lands managed by the BLM within the identified areas for establishment/amendment which are not subject to county jurisdiction according to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, 43 U.S.C. § 1701 et seq.) The inclusion of BLM parcels in the proposed amendment may lead to confusion regarding their status and misuse of land designation. BLM recommends that these parcels be explicitly excluded from the amendment to ensure clarity and adherence to existing regulations governing federal lands.



(T-5) Shawn Barnby, BLM Realty Specialist, submitted testimony in a neutral position, providing two maps identifying lands owned by the BLM and other federal lands.

(T-6) Catherine Hughes, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner, submitted testimony in a neutral position, providing a map identifying lands owned by the BLM and other federal lands.

3. With no questions from the Commission, Chairman Aullman called for testimony from the public.

Testimony in a position of support was received from:

(T-8) Steven Adams, 5 E 2<sup>nd</sup> N, Sugar City, ID, provided testimony first in a neutral position but then decided he was more in a supportive position. Mr. Adams resides in Sugar City but is a managing partner of the Twin Buttes RV Park and Choice Services Group, LLC which is a landowner in the proposed area. His perspective was that the proposal from County Planning and Development Services had a lot of positives and that it was headed in the right direction, but he wanted to point out a few concerns. Mr. Adams testified that he has good intentions for growth in the area and liked the idea of establishing Multi-Use areas, which allow for more options. His concern was whether the Multi-Use area would still require a Conditional Use Permit process for his desired land uses. Mr. Adams testified that after attending the previous hearing item on a private gun range, he commented that the process was very intense. Mr. Adams testified that he currently hosts UTV events and has met with Planning & Development Services to develop a UTV racetrack and a more modern RV park. Mr. Adams testified that he would like to see Atomic City become a really nice area where it would support the existing residential uses and allow commercial development like the race track. He appreciated the time that was taken to work through this proposal and thought Atomic City had a lot to offer.

Director Olsen explained the Multi-Use Comprehensive Plan Map Area, and that this Area allows consideration for a Zoning Amendment to any Zoning District designation. Mr. Adams asked about certain parcels and if their respective zoning classifications were staying the same, to which Director Olsen confirmed. Director Olsen stated that the area around the former Atomic City townsite to the Highway was reviewed and explained that Planning Staff tried to zone for current land uses. Assistant Director/Lead Planner Jackman reminded Mr. Adams that the RV Park is proposed to change to "C2" Heavy Commercial and that modification would positively impact him. Mr. Adams agreed that it was a positive change.

Testimony in a neutral position was received by:

(T-7) Steven Eckman, 1754 S 2650 W, Atomic City, ID, questioned how this proposed action would affect his property. Mr. Eckman testified that he owns eight (8) narrow lots within the former Atomic City townsite. He explained that these lots contain his home, chicken coop, and small greenhouse. He was concerned about whether the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning District designations would remain residential or change to something

else. He testified that there are no longer farms in that area because there are no water rights. Mr. Eckman showed the location of his parcels on a map. Director Olsen explained that those parcels are proposed to be zoned “R” Residential, which is the zone that is most closely associated with the small parcel size and that this designation would not affect his parcels.

4. During Commission discussion, Commissioner Jolley testified that the proposal looked good, and there has not been any testimony to the contrary. He testified that this proposal would allow a lot of opportunities in the future and for development to happen. Commissioner Bingham appreciated the Application presentation.

## **II. REASON**

The Planning and Zoning Commission found:

1. Atomic City was formally disincorporated on November 30, 2020, by Order and Declaration of Disincorporation signed by the Bingham County Board of Commissioners; and
2. when the order was recorded, the designation of Comprehensive Plan Map Areas or Zoning Districts was not designated; and
3. following the procedures outlined in Bingham County Code Sections 10-3-6 and 10-15-3, the Commission found that it was in the County’s best interest and a benefit to the public for the subject parcels within the former Atomic City boundaries to be designated with a Comprehensive Plan Map Area of Residential and the parcels to the north and east of the former Atomic City boundaries as Multi-use; and
4. the Application met the notice requirements of Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 65, and Bingham County Code Section 10-3-6.

## **III. DECISION**

Based on the record, Commissioner Jolley moved to recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan Map Area Designation Amendments on lands consisting of a total approx. assessed acreage of 1,262.38 acres and extending from approx. the eastern border of T3S R34E Sec. 13 to the western border of T3S R34E Sec. 23, as follows:

No.	Current	Proposed
1.	Disincorporated Atomic City Plat – None (see Note below)	Residential/Agricultural Area (except for lots containing the Atomic Water Works System and the Atomic City Bar and Store)
2.	Lots within the disincorporated City Plat for the operation of the Atomic Water Works System and the Atomic City Bar and Store (Parcel Nos. RP7060900, RP7061000, RP7061100, RP7061200 & RP7061300) – None	Multi-Use Area
3.	All parcels immediately surrounding the disincorporated Atomic City Plat for a distance between approximately 600 feet and 1,400 feet have a Comprehensive Plan Map designation of a Residential/Agricultural Area	Multi-Use Area
4.	Two parcels to the north of the disincorporated Atomic City Plat, one owned by Gary Coffin and Katz Nukaya (RP0019328), and the other owned by Blake Lyle (RP0019303), have a Comprehensive Plan Map designation of an Agricultural Area	Multi-Use Area
5.	Parcels within approximately 600 feet on either side of the Atomic City Connector Road have a Comprehensive Plan Map designation of an Industrial/Commercial Area	Multi-Use Area
6.	Parcels on both sides of US Highway 26 for a distance of approximately 500 feet have a Comprehensive Plan Map designation of a Multi-Use Area	Multi-Use Area
7.	All parcels outside of the Multi-Use Area with a Comprehensive Plan Map designation of an Agricultural Area	Agricultural Area (no change)
8.	All parcels outside of the Multi-Use Area with a Comprehensive Plan Map designation of a Natural Resource/Agricultural Area	Natural Resource/Agricultural Area (no change)
9.	Portion of Parcel No. RP0020500, owned by Glenn and Theresa Dalling (located south of	Agricultural Area



	the Atomic City Plat), has a Comprehensive Plan Map designation of a Residential/Agriculture Area	
10.	United States of America (BLM Idaho Falls District Fire Station #3) Parcel No. RP0019327	No Designation

With the following exception:

1. Lands owned by BLM, United States of America, and/or the State of Idaho, which are recommended not to have a Comprehensive Plan Map Area designation or a Zoning District designation.

Commissioner Bingham seconded the motion. Commissioners Jolley, Bingham, Adams, Carroll, Johns, Jolley, and Watson voted in favor. The motion passed.

Next, Commissioner Carroll moved to recommend approval of the Zoning Map Area Designation Amendment from Residential/Agricultural to Agricultural on lands consisting of a total approx. assessed acreage of 1,262.38 acres and extending from approx. the eastern border of T3S R34E Sec. 13 to the western border of T3S R34E Sec. 23, as follows:

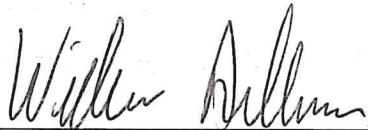
No.	Current	Proposed
1.	Disincorporated Atomic City Plat – None	“R” Residential (except for lots containing the Atomic Water Works System and the Atomic City Bar and Store)
2.	Lots within the disincorporated City Plat for the operation of the Atomic Water Works System and the Atomic City Bar and Store (Parcel Nos. RP7060900, RP7061000, RP7061100, RP7061200 & RP7061300) – None	“C2” Heavy Commercial  The operation of the Bar and Store is an existing non-conforming land use. Staff believes that a “C2” Heavy Commercial Zoning District would be most appropriate to support the existing land use.
3.	All parcels surrounding the Atomic City Plat have a Zoning District designation of Agriculture, except for five (5) parcels along the Atomic City Connector Road zoned “C2” Heavy Commercial. Those include:  Beco Construction Co Inc - Parcel No. RP0019325  United States of America (BLM Idaho Falls District Fire Station #3) - Parcel No. RP0019327	“A” Agriculture (no change)  “C2” Heavy Commercial (no change)  No Designation  “C2” Heavy Commercial (no change)

	Choice Services Group LLC - Parcel Nos. RP0019326 & RP0019600  David and Charlene Walters Parcel No. RP0019602	"C2" Heavy Commercial (no change)
4.	Twin Buttes RV Park has a Zoning District designation of Agriculture (Parcel No. RP0019330)  Atomic Motor Raceway has a Zoning District designation of Agriculture (Parcel Nos. RP0019301, RP0019306 & RP0019303)  Atomic Water Works Secondary Well has a Zoning District designation of Agriculture (Parcel No. RP0019313)	"C2" Heavy Commercial  "C2" Heavy Commercial. The operation of the Atomic City Raceway received a Special Use Permit for an Outdoor Amusement Race Facility on July 10, 2002, in an "A" Agriculture Zoning District. Staff believes that a "C2" Heavy Commercial Zoning District would be most appropriate to support the existing land use.  "C2" Heavy Commercial

With the following exception:

1. Lands owned by BLM, United States of America, and/or the State of Idaho, which are recommended not to have a Comprehensive Plan Map Area designation or a Zoning District designation.

Commissioner Jolley seconded the motion. Commissioners Carroll, Jolley, Adams, Bingham, Johns, Watson, and Winder voted in favor. The motion passed.



William Aullman, Chairman  
Bingham County Planning and Zoning Commission



Date